REMARKS

Applicants have now had an opportunity to carefully consider the Examiner's comments set forth in the Office Action of July 1, 2005.

Reconsideration of the Application is requested.

Brief Summary of the Office Action

Claim 11 is allowed.

Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 12-15 and 17-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Nishii (US 6,501,556).

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishii in view of Toru (JP 07-307827).

Claims 4, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishii in view of Motoyama (US 5,550,614).

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishii in view of Ota (US 6,233,057).

Comments and/or Arguments

Claim 1 distinguishes patentably over the prior art. Claim 1 calls for a method operative to automatically exclude an unwanted page in an input stream of a printing system job from an output stream of the printing system job. The method includes the steps of: establishing a characteristic of a page indicative of an unwanted page; monitoring the input stream to detect data representative of the characteristic; identifying one or more pages of the printing system job that contain data representative of the characteristic; and removing the identified pages thereby excluding them from the output stream.

Nishii fails to teach each and every one of the foregoing steps/elements claimed. For example, Nishii does not expressly teach establishing a characteristic of a page indicative of an unwanted page. Rather, Nishii merely teaches using a blank page detector 10 to detect blank pages. Turning on a "blank page output mode" also does not teach establishing a characteristic of a page indicative of an unwanted page. More specifically, Nishii provides no teaching as to how the blank page detector 10 works, only that it detects blank pages. Clearly, there is no teaching in Nishii that any characteristic indicative of unwanted page is established. Rather, Nishii merely teaches that a particular mode may be set using a key 5. The

fact that that mode may include detecting blank pages does not mean that Nishii teaches the establishment of characteristics indicative of an unwanted page.

Furthermore, as to claim 2, the Office Action fails to state sufficient motivation for making the alleged combination and hence a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established. Rather, the motivation merely indicates that the two references are combinable but provides no reason why one of ordinary skill in the art would want to combine them together.

Amended claim 3 now call for "requesting permission from a user to remove the identified pages." Nishii does not disclose requesting such permission from a user.

Amended claim 7 now states that "the step of describing characteristics comprises describing characteristics of a non-blank separator sheet." Nishii only discloses a blank page detector **10**. Nowhere does Nishii disclose describing characteristics of a non-blank sheet.

Claim 9 states that "the step of searching within input image data comprises using pattern recognition techniques to search for matching characteristics." Contrary to the assertion in the Office Action, nowhere does Motoyama teach using pattern recognition. Rather, Motoyama merely teaches a counter that totals up the number of marks on a page. Counting marks on a page is not the same a recognizing a pattern made by those marks. That is to say, counting marks is not a pattern recognition technique as claimed. On the contrary, pattern recognition refers to recognizing patterns made by the relative placement of a collection of marks and/or spaces within a page. This entails more than merely counting the total number of marks on a page.

Claim 11 already stands allowed.

Claims 12 also defines patentably over the art of record. Again, Nishii only addresses the removal of blank pages. Accordingly, nowhere does Nishii teach the step of "describing characteristics of the unwanted portions of the job" as claimed. Being that Nishii only removes blank pages, it is not necessary to describe the characteristics that are indicative of unwanted portions of the job. Rather, the characteristic in Nishii is always "blank pages" - it can't be anything else, so there is no need to describe it. On the contrary, in the present application, the unwanted portion is not always a blank page, rather it may be, e.g., a non-blank separator sheet. See, e.g., page 5, lines 2-29 of the specification. Accordingly, the claim calls

for describing the characteristics that are indicative of the unwanted portions of the job, e.g., so that it can be determined which types of pages or portions are to be removed from the job, i.e., blank pages, non-blank separator sheets, etc.

Amended claim 13 calls for "a pattern detector operative to receive an arbitrary description of an unwanted portion of the input image data." Nishii disclose no pattern detector. Nishii only discloses a blank page detector **10**. Detecting a blank page is not the same as detecting a pattern. Again, as described above with respect to claim 9, pattern detection entails more than merely determining the amount of marks on a page or a lack thereof. Additionally, the blank page detector **10** of Nishii does not receive an arbitrary description of an unwanted portion of the input image data. First, the detector **10** already knows what is unwanted, namely blank pages, because that is all it can detect. Accordingly, the detector **10** does not need to and in fact does not receive a description of an unwanted portion. Second, being that the detector **10** can only detect blank pages, any description that it may hypothetically receive would not be arbitrary. On the contrary, the description would be the same every time, namely, a blank page.

Claims 14 and 15 depend from claim 13 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 13.

Claim 18 recites that "the image destination comprises a xerographic printer." Nishii does not disclose a xerographic printer. A "page printer" is not necessarily a "xerographic printer." Rather, a page printer merely refers to a printer that composes and/or prints an entire page at a time, as opposed to, e.g., a line printer. The fact that a printer may be a page printer does not mean that it is in fact a xerographic printer. "Page printer" is not synonymous with "xerographic printer." That is to say, not all page printers are xerographic printers. Accordingly, the fact that Nishii may disclose a "page printer" does not mean the Nishii teaches a xerographic printer.

As to claim 19, the Office Action recites at page 6, paragraph 11 that Motoyama teaches the claimed subject matter. However, whether or not Motoyama in fact teaches the claimed subject matter is irrelevant insomuch claim 19 was rejected as being anticipated by Nishii alone, and Applicant can find nowhere in Nishii where the claimed subject matter is disclosed.

Amended claim 20 is now directed to excluding unwanted non-blank pages of a job from an output stream. Nishii discloses no such printing system.
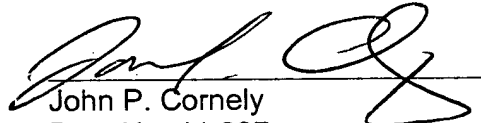
CONCLUSION

For the reasons detailed above, it is submitted all claims remaining in the application are now in condition for allowance. The foregoing comments do not require unnecessary additional search or examination.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, he/she is hereby authorized to call John Cornely, at telephone number (216) 861-5582.

Respectfully submitted,

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-9-